

REMARKS

Claims 1-24 are pending in this application.

At the outset, Applicants wish to note that a Preliminary Amendment was submitted in this case on August 13, 2001. A copy of the Preliminary Amendment is attached with this response, along with the corresponding postcard receipt from the PTO.

Claim Objections

Claims 4-19 and 23-24 have been objected as being in improper form because a multiple dependent claim cannot depend on another multiple dependent claim. Applicants submit that the previously filed Preliminary Amendment corrects the improper form. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection respectfully are requested.

Claim Rejections

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

A. Response to Rejection of Claims 1-3 and 20-22 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by de Lasa et al.

In response to the rejection of claims 1-3 and 20-22 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,424,262 of de Lasa et al. ("de Lasa"), Applicants respectfully submit that the reference does not teach or disclose all the elements of the claimed invention.

The present invention as recited in independent claim 1 relates to a process for preparing a supported catalyst comprising the following steps:

- (a) preparing a catalyst solution comprising a soluble catalyst component;
- (b) introducing into a contacting vessel:
 - (i) a porous support material in particle form, and
 - (ii) a volume of the catalyst solution not greater than the total pore volume of the porous support material introduced;
- (c) discharging the solid material resulting from step (b) from the contacting vessel and introducing it into an evaporation zone where it is suspended in an inert gas flow under such conditions that the solvent evaporates; and reintroducing at least part of the material resulting from step (c) into the contacting vessel

together with another volume of the catalyst solution not greater than the total pore volume of the reintroduced material.

In contrast, de Lasa discloses a method of preparing a fluidized cracking catalyst with in situ metal traps, which comprising the following steps:

- (a) impregnating particles of a zeolite catalyst by the incipient wetness technique under sub-atmospheric conditions with a mixture of a tin compound and an antimony compound dissolved in an organic solvent;
- (b) stirring the impregnated catalyst in paste form while still under sub-atmospheric conditions;
- (c) heating the impregnated catalyst in the presence of an oxygen-containing gas until dry.

The disclosure of de Lasa teaches a method completely different from that of the present patent application in several aspects.

1. In the present invention, the catalyst component is in the solution before it deposits onto the porous support material; whereas de Lasa teaches a solid zeolite catalyst which is an active cracking catalyst. The metal compounds deposited on the zeolite catalyst function as metal traps for improving the passivation of the cracking catalyst (col. 2, line 1-25). Therefore, de Lasa does not deal with a catalyst solution at all, but refers to a cracking catalyst in a solid form.

2. Step (c) of de Lasa not only is different from but actually teaches away from the evaporation step (c) of the present invention. Step (c) of de Lasa is not an evaporation step carried out in the presence of a flow of an inert gas, as claimed in the present invention. de Lasa teaches in step (c) a combustion step carried out at an elevated temperature in the presence of oxygen (highly reactive compound), as clearly stated at col 4, lines 9-16:

" Then the catalyst paste is heated in the presence of an oxygen containing gas, e.g. air, at an elevated temperature, e.g. within the range of about 425 to 800°C, ..., for a period of at least about 2 hours. During this treatment, organometallic compounds are combusted and the catalyst recovers its original colour and free-flowing state".

In view of the completely different technical issues addressed by de Lasa, and in view of the above remarkable differences with regard to impregnation step (a) and evaporation step (c), it is clear that the subject matter of the present invention is novel over de Lasa.

Applicants therefore submit that the application stands in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner have questions or comments regarding this application or this request, Applicant's agent would welcome the opportunity to discuss the case with the Examiner.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge U.S. PTO Deposit Account 08-2336 in the amount of any fee required for consideration of this Amendment.

This is intended to be a complete response to the Office Action mailed June 25, 2004.

Respectfully submitted,

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(Date)

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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with sufficient postage thereon with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450 on October 21, 2004.

Alfred A. Dutton
Oct 21, 2004
Date of Signature